

Merry-Go-Round

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**Watergate Meeting
'In Mitchell's Office'****Jack Anderson**

WATERGATE defendant James McCord asserts the bugging of the Democratic National Committee was planned secretly in Attorney General John Mitchell's Justice Department office by Mitchell, White House counsel John Dean and Nixon campaign aides Gordon Liddy and Jeb Magruder.

McCord has given a written memo to this effect to the Senate committee probing the Watergate scandal. Quoting Liddy himself, the stolid McCord, who served as campaign security chief, sets the date of the meeting in February 1972 — while Mitchell was still Attorney General.

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IN HIS MEMO for the Senate dated March 26, McCord says Liddy gave him considerable details about the clandestine Justice Department meeting. As McCord reports in his two-page initialed document:

"John Dean, Jeb Magruder, Gordon Liddy and John Mitchell in Feb. 1972 met in Mitchell's office at the Department of Justice and held the first formal discussion of bugging and related operations.

"Liddy had planned for the meeting very carefully and had drafted out in long-hand budget figures for various items of expense, and had discussed them and certain details of the overall operation with Jeb Magruder (who) reportedly set up the meeting with Mitchell."

McCord's carefully-worded memo says he believed Liddy was planning to send or handcarry the plans "to someone in the White House. I do not know to whom he took it." *

The alleged conspirators gathered in Mitchell's office in the afternoon, as McCord recalled it and "from what Liddy told me it lasted an hour or more."

Liddy, according to McCord, said that the discussions at the Justice Department "covered the pros and cons of various bugging type operations. No decisions were made at the meeting . . . but the impression Liddy had seem(ed) to be that the operation would be approved."

Within a few days, "Dean told Liddy that a way would have to be worked out to undertake the operation without directly involving the Attorney General so that he would have deniability about it at a future date.

"Dean told Liddy at this time that the funding for the operation would subsequently come to him through other than regular Committee For the Re-election (of the President) funding mechanisms so that there would be no record of it . . ." **

"About 30 days after the February meeting in the A/G's (Attorney General's) office, Liddy told me that the operation 'had been approved' . . . my impression was that this word of the approval came from Dean, although this was not specifically stated by Liddy."

A few months later in June, McCord and four Cubans were trapped inside Democratic headquarters by city police. All five, plus Liddy and ex-White House aide Howard Hunt have been convicted in the case.

Footnote: Mitchell, Magruder and Dean have all denied any advance knowledge of the bugging.

Following passages included in column as carried by Washington Post, 2 Apr 73:

* As Liddy recounted it to McCord, the crucial Justice Department meeting was "set up for one particular day, but was cancelled, and reset for a day or so later."

McCord's statement says Liddy spent about \$7,000 to have four-by-four-foot charts drawn up for the meeting.

"The charts were brought in late one afternoon and left in (Liddy's) office on the 4th floor wrapped in brown paper. My impression was that they were commercially done . . ."

** Liddy said Dean told him "to destroy the (\$7,000) charts but Liddy said that he had paid so much for them that he did not plan to do so . . . I never saw the charts . . ."